

How and Why Is Canada British?

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By THE HONOURABLE WILLIAM RENWICK
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To those who, with me, believe that the fact that Canada is British is of the utmost importance, particularly for the future of the English-speaking world, the enquiry why and how she is so, will prove of absorbing interest.

No doubt, any conclusion arrived at as to the result had the actors in history or their circumstances been different, must be more or less conjectural—still I shall venture to give you my views as to the underlying causes of this miracle of the centuries.

In the occurrences which took place and the result, many will see the working of an over-ruling Providence—and even those who see but blind chance will be compelled to admit the marvel of the history.

What fixed the destiny of Canada was the difference between her people and the people to the south of her.

Why the English adventurers after they had discovered Newfoundland and Labrador, left to the French all the valuable and enticing lands on either

side of the St. Lawrence River and Gulf, will never, perhaps, be fully explained.

But we do know that after the second voyage—in 1517—of the Cabots, when they got as far north as the mouth of the Hudson Straits in their search for a route to India and Cipango, the English in great measure confined their attention to the Atlantic Coast which, indeed, the Cabots had already explored from Cape Breton to South Carolina. They selected what is now the territory of the United States for settlement, leaving to Spain and Portugal the land further South, to France that further North. Cortez conquered Mexico, Balboa crossed the Isthmus to Panama, Pizarro followed him and subdued Peru, Cabral discovered Brazil, and the Portuguese settled there in the first permanent colony of any European State. The English privateers and buccaneers harried the Spanish and Portuguese, robbed and murdered; but did not attempt to occupy their territory by permanent settlers.

So to the north, Frobisher and Davis, Baffin, Fox and James risked their lives in the attempt to find a North-West passage; but they neither were seeking immediate profit in gold or gem nor a favourable spot for settlement, but the way to markets for English manufactures—and incidentally the glory of the English flag.

Raleigh and Grenville took possession of Virginia toward the end of the 16th century, Massachusetts was chartered in 1629, Boston founded the following year, Connecticut settled a few years later (in 1633) and Maryland at the same time, Pennsylvania in 1680. With the exception of Lord Baltimore's settlement in Maryland these were strongly Protestant communities: and all without exception were English in feeling and sentiment.

But all this time the French were building up a strong French and Catholic Colony in what is now

Quebec—a colony as different as possible from those to the south. And both the strength and the difference were needed against the time of the great division of the English-speaking peoples.

The French were not allowed to trespass upon the territory which the English had fixed upon as their own.

In 1613 Saussaye led a French expedition which intended to make a settlement to the south of territory already reduced into their possession—these made their way to Mount Desert in Maine, and there founded a colony, St. Sauveur, at what is still called Frenchman's Bay. But even when building their first cabins and turning the first sod, they were set upon by Samuel Argall, half hero and half pirate, who had been sent north from Virginia to clear the coast of intruders. The French ship was destroyed, the settlement laid waste, and while some were taken by the English Captain in chains to Virginia, fifteen were set adrift upon the wild Atlantic in an open boat. St. Croix and Port Royal were also pillaged and destroyed—and when Argall was on his way home, the Dutchmen who had settled in Manhattan were warned by him to consider themselves subjects of the King of England. They hauled down the Dutch flag and spread the English colours to the breeze—till he got out of sight.

A little later the ambition or the injured vanity of a royal favourite brought on a war which threatened to make Canada English before its time.

Urged by George Villiers, first Duke of Buckingham, Charles I made war on France. Some say that, deputed to bring the young Queen Henrietta Maria to England, Buckingham had made himself conspicuous by his splendour—going so far as to make love to the Queen of France, he was repulsed: and it is said, he then threw all his influence in favour of war.

Although Bluff King Hal, Henry VIII, had founded the English navy, at this time there were few royal ships; but a Company of Merchant Adventurers was formed in London by private persons to seize French and Spanish ships—and that Company obtained a patent from Charles I to establish plantations on the shores of the River St. Lawrence. The Company fitted out a fleet of three ships of war and placed it under the command of David Kirke—he sailed for the St. Lawrence in 1628.

In the summer of 1629, the Englishmen appeared before Quebec: the gallant Champlain then in command had but little ammunition, less provisions and a garrison of only a few (16) half-starved men: and he could do nothing but surrender.

Quebec—and that implied Canada—remained English for only three years. Champlain did not cease urging the French Court to demand back his beloved Nouvelle France—and Cardinal Richelieu no doubt felt that by the loss of the American colony, France had lost prestige—accordingly when the terms of the treaty of St. Germain-en-Laye came to be discussed, the restoration of Canada was insisted upon. Charles yielded for a reason which long baffled the enquiry of historians and which became manifest only the other day from a letter discovered in the British Museum by the former Canadian Archivist, Mr. Brymner. Half of Henrietta Maria's dowry had been left unpaid, and the King, Stewart-like, cared nothing for the glory and honour of his country in comparison with pecuniary benefit to himself—and it was to secure the payment of this money that Charles agreed to cede Quebec to its former Masters. Disregarding the claims of Kirke and the Merchant Adventurers, he seems to have gone so far as to sequester not only the furs taken in Quebec at its capture but also those obtained by trading at Quebec and Tadousac.

Some historians, English and Canadian, regret the loss in 1632 of Quebec to England; a regret I do not share. In my view, had Canada remained under the English flag in the then condition of her population, few and sparsely settled, she would have been filled by English immigrants and not French—her condition would have differed in no respect from that of the English colonies to the South—and when the time came, as in the existing conception of colonial government it must needs come, for the colonies to repudiate the rule of a King and Parliament beyond the sea, Canada would have made common cause with the thirteen colonies.

That was not to be—Canada to fulfil her high destiny must necessarily remain French for a time.

The time had come to get rid of all but the two nations in the northern part of the Continent. The Dutch at Manhattan at the mouth of the Hudson, notwithstanding the warning of Argall, had continued to fly the flag of the Netherlands; they had spread into New Jersey and on the Delaware displaced the Swedes: but in 1664, Admiral Lawson and Colonel Nicolls took possession of New Amsterdam which then became, as it has ever since continued, New York—and except for a couple of years, 1673-4, when the Dutch rule was again established, New York remained English and British until the American Revolution. The Spaniards further south were then negligible—and the English and French divided between them the Continent of North America, north of Mexico.

And whether the mother countries were at war or peace, with but little interruption the colonies carried on a kind of war—*petite guerre*—the Englishmen and Frenchman if they did not themselves carry the musket, each supplied his Indian with arms and ammunition to commit havoc on the settlements of the other. Perhaps the French were the worst, for

captives were delivered over to the mercy of the savage and his tender mercies were cruel.* Hundreds of English settlers were slain and scalped, and scores of women met an even worse fate. I have elsewhere said: "In the decade, 1680-1690, both English and Dutch in New York endeavoured by presents, and especially by furnishing gratis, guns, powder and lead, to induce the Iroquois to war against the French—and it was only the view of the Iroquois that it would be better first of all to destroy the Christian Indians, allies of the French-Canadians, that saved New France from a most devastating and horrible warfare at that time—the subjects of James II hesitated themselves to attack the subjects of his French friend; but they had no compunctions about doing by Indians what they would have liked to do in person. 'Qui facit per alium, facit per se,' does not always apply internationally."

After the abdication of James II, when England reasserted herself and joined in the Grand Alliance of Continental powers against Louis XIV, the hand of the Canadian French appeared openly and without concealment. The projected attack on New York by way of Albany and the Hudson had indeed to be abandoned, but expeditions with a smaller number of men were made against the hated "Bastonnais"—the double purpose was in view to strike terror into the English and to blood their Indian allies and please them with plunder, human and otherwise. One expedition from Montreal, half French, half Indian, fell upon Schenectady, another from Three Rivers

* How the New Englander hated and at the same time feared the French-Canadian may perhaps be appreciated from a consideration of a passage in "The Wonders of the Invisible World," by the Rev Cotton Mather, published at Boston "in New England" in 1693. He says: "'Tis Beelzebub; 'tis he that is *the Devil*, and the rest are his *Angels* or his *Souldiers*. Think on vast Regiments of cruel and bloody *French Dragoons* with an Intendant over them, overrunning a pillaged neighbourhood, and you will think a little, what the Constitution among the *Devils* is." The French are not compared to Devils, but Devils to the French!!

under Hertel ravaged the Village of Salmon Falls (Berwick) in New Hampshire: Portneuf led a third from Quebec, his victim being Fort Loyall, now Portland, Maine. Most of the inhabitants were tomahawked on the spot and the remainder carried off to a captivity—to many worse than death.

On the other part, the Schuylers led invading forces into Canada in two successive years, killing and taking scalps of men and women, French and Indian.

Then the English colonies determined upon an invasion on a large and, it was hoped, decisive scale: William Phips was sent to reduce Quebec. He had captured Port Royal, but Quebec proved too much for him. Indeed, it is undoubtedly true that brave as the English colonists were, for any such task, it required the skill of regular soldiers from across the sea, and also the unifying power of the Home Government to keep the several colonies in a uniform policy.

Canada was not to be conquered by colonists: Boston and New York were not to have anything to say in her government. She was to be kept French against the day when her hatred of the English Colonist would become a tower of strength to the British cause.

Even the great effort in 1711 by Home and Colonial authorities failed. Admiral Hovenden Walker and General "Jack Hill" were sent by the Harley-St. John administration to drive the French out of Canada. A more disgraceful calamity had never befallen the British or the English arms than followed—we have to go forward to the incompetent leaders against the revolting colonists seventy years after, before we meet its like. I can find nothing in the past of Admiral Walker which can account for it—one can hardly say that his abstemiousness had anything to do with the disaster (for he is said, at least in his later years, to have drunk nothing but

water and eaten nothing but vegetables). No doubt some would consider this rather suspicious amid a nation and at a time of beef and beer.

But "Jack Hill" owed his appointment to a gross piece of favouritism. He was the brother of Abigail Hill, Lady Masham, the favourite of Queen Anne, and related to Sarah Churchill, the Duchess of Marlborough. She says of him that he was no use as a soldier. It was through the influence of Mrs. Masham that Queen Anne was induced to insist on the appointment of Hill to the command—much against his will and his better judgment, Marlborough made him a General and a little later, Harley gave him command of the army of the Quebec expedition.

Through stupidity and carelessness, transports were cast away on the rocky Northern shore of the St. Lawrence, eight vessels were wrecked and nearly a thousand soldiers drowned. Hill quailed before this misfortune and resolved to abandon the undertaking—the "society man" who shone at dinners and routs was no Wellington to try again and again; he bent before the first blast of misfortune, and Quebec was again saved for France and against the great day to come toward the end of the century.

The treaty of Utrecht in 1713 prevented any further attempts at that time on the part of Britain. Great Britain had been formed in 1703 by the Union of England and Scotland, and hereafter we must speak of British arms, etc.

For fifty years the French increased in Canada: increasing in numbers, they did not become more friendly to the American-English to the south of them. The time came at length for the British colours to fly on every French fort post and garrison—and James Wolfe was commissioned to conquer Quebec—the almost perpetual state of warfare in the Lake Champlain district was at last to cease.

How the gentle, kindly, delicate Wolfe accom-

plished his allotted task all know: he died happy in the knowledge that Canada was British at last.

By the Treaty of Paris, 10th February, 1763, France renounced all claim to our country.

Shortly thereafter came what might have been foreseen, what had been foreseen by a few and openly predicted by at least one. The Colonies to the south, relieved from the ever haunting fear of an attack from the north began to take up more continuously and persistently their grievances against the Home Government. Arrogance and stupidity on the one hand, insolent demand on the other led to an open revolt—and unequalled incapacity on the part of the British generals led to unparalleled disaster to British arms and to humiliation which was tolerable only because it had been inflicted by English hands.

The revolting colonists did not forget Canada—they always desired that Canada should join them and so round off the Union. An address to the Canadians was printed in French and distributed amongst them, but while the Canadians had not yet quite reconciled themselves to British rule, Sir Guy Carleton kept them from open revolt by pursuing a policy diametrically opposite to that of the Royal governors in the other Colonies.

I am wholly persuaded that had it not been for the difference in language and creed, for the traditional and hereditary enmity of the French toward the English colonists, even Carleton would have failed. Second, nevertheless, among our Canadian heroes and second only to Wolfe, we should ever hold Sir Guy Carleton, Lord Dorchester.

American invasion was repelled by his energy and skill, coupled with the loyalty of the French-Canadian—and Benjamin Franklin and his colleagues failed in their attempt, when sent to Montreal for that purpose, to win the Canadian to the American cause.

There had been some discontent by reason of the Royal Proclamation of 1763 introducing the civil as well as the criminal law of England into Canada, but this was allayed by the Quebec Act of 1774 which re-introduced the old Canadian civil law, although it left the English criminal law in full force and effect. This the Canadian did not object to—cruel and barbarous, in our more enlightened view as it was, it was less so than his own.

It is true that the malcontents in the thirteen colonies described this Act as intended to establish in Canada “a religion that has deluged Britain in blood and dispersed impiety, bigotry, persecution, murder and rebellion through every part of the world”—that came with good grace from the descendants of those who had come to America for the liberty to worship God in their own way, from those who were themselves about to rebel! And there are even yet to be found those who look upon the Quebec Act as a tragedy. Whatever other effect it had, however, it certainly removed the grievances of the native Canadian, reconciled him, at least partially, to British rule, and helped to checkmate the attempt of the Americans to make Canadians as disloyal as themselves.

Upon terms of peace being arranged between Great Britain and her revolting Colonies, the United States agreed that Congress should earnestly recommend it to the legislatures of their respective States to provide for the restitution of all estates, rights and properties belonging to real British subjects. Congress was also earnestly to recommend to the several States a reconsideration and revision of all laws in the premises, so as to make them perfectly consistent with justice and equity, and with that spirit of conciliation which on the return of the blessings of peace should universally prevail. The United Empire Loyalists had left home and property that they might

retain their allegiance and their flag: when they asked for the benefit of this provision, they not only did not get back their property which had been confiscated, but they were met with insult and contumely. It is only the other day that American historians came to speak with respect of these "Tories" who gave up all for the sake of their loyalty to the British flag—an example of loyalty almost without parallel in history, ancient or modern.

Upper Canada was settled to a great extent by these United Empire Loyalists and accordingly, but from other causes, Upper Canada was as little attracted by the United States as her neighbour Lower Canada.

It was little wonder then that, when the United States, with the intent and for the purpose of conquering Canada launched the iniquitous war of 1812, the Upper Canadian, either a former American or the son of a former American, proved as determined a foe to the American as his fellow-subject in Lower Canada. The promises of the invader were discounted, his threats despised, his force resisted—how gloriously resisted, all Canadians know.

De Salaberry in the east at Chateauguay showed what could be done by French-Canadian valour and skill—while in the west Sir Isaac Brock was everywhere, his spirit pervaded everything and everybody—and when he met a glorious death at Queenston Heights it is not too much to say that if Wolfe took Canada for Britain, and Carleton preserved it for her in the first great peril, in the second, Brock died having saved Canada for the Empire *in æternum*, as against any outside foe or invader.

What was thereafter to be feared was not external aggression, but treason within, either treason against the Crown on the part of Canadians or treason against the rights of freeborn Canadians on the part of those who were charged with the government of Canada,

whether in Westminster, or in Quebec, or in Toronto.

I have elsewhere traced the constitutional history of Canada: and here and now only point out that while arbitrary measures provoked temporary opposition, the main course has been a gradual giving way by the Home Government to the advancing democracy of the Canadian people, until now we have unlimited Home Rule, unlimited control over our own affairs. Canada, a daughter in her mother's house, is mistress in her own. And it has been that gradual yielding to the demands of the Colony which has kept us such enthusiastic supporters of British connection. We could not be British in the highest and truest sense unless we were in every sense free men.

Open rebellion there was once—technically and legally treason—that was in 1837-1838. I do not intend to say much about that singular episode in Canadian history—perhaps the full story cannot be told, certainly it has not been told—and it may even be that it should not yet be told. And I have no intention of attempting to tell the story.

Speaking of the fiasco in Upper Canada, it is almost certain that very few of those who took part in that movement, even of those who took up arms, had any idea of an actual revolt—of active opposition in arms against the Crown. Some few of the leaders perhaps quite appreciated the gravity of their proceedings, but not the main body of their supporters. To many it was a mere frolic, to most but a political demonstration, though to no small number it was the occasion of lifelong regret, of disgrace, and to some few of death itself.

In Lower Canada the facts were rather different; the rebellious habitant intended to rebel, but the rebellion was rather racial than political.

In neither Province had the movement the slightest chance of success. Sir Francis Bond Head with all his folly was not wrong in considering that

there was no need of Imperial troops to keep Upper Canada to her allegiance. Upper Canada was, as she always has been, loyal to the core: and not even the wrongs which no small portion of her people were labouring under could induce her to become an out-cast from the Empire.

In Lower Canada the Imperial troops were much in evidence, but they received strenuous and whole-hearted assistance from the loyal French and English Canadians.

The trouble never was very serious and needed not to cause much anxiety, so long as the United States did not interfere. While there was altogether too much favour shown to the Rebels by State Governments and State officers, the conduct of the central Government and its officers was in most instances beyond reproach.

This, the only instance in Canadian History of open treason on the part of Canadians—with the exception of the North-West troubles—passed away with little but beneficial results.

Lord Durham came as a consequence of the Rebellion—and in consequence of his report, Canada received her true status as a self-governing nation.

I think it may not be without interest if I say a few words about one or two other incidents in our history.

The story of the trade relations between the United States on the one hand and Canada and the mother country on the other, is very curious.

When the Treaty of Peace was made in 1785 between the old land and the new United States, the United States proposed that they be allowed to participate in the trade with the colonies on this Continent on the same terms as England—but this met with a firm refusal. Negotiations were renewed in 1785 and 1789 without success. Even when Jay got his Treaty through in 1794, the Imperial Govern-

ment refused to give way on trade relations. American ships were seized, and this furnished a pretext for the war of 1812; it was only a pretext, for there is no possible doubt that the real object of this war was the conquest and absorption of Canada. The Treaty of Ghent in 1814 was silent on the matter. In 1817 Congress attempted retaliation, non-intercourse was decreed, and at last in 1825 England gave way. But this time the Americans balked, and when they came round the British Government had got angry and refused to listen to Gallatin, the American Minister, when he tried to get the matter put on a satisfactory basis.

In 1830 a limited arrangement was arrived at, which lasted till the Reciprocity Treaty in 1854. Up to 1830 and for a time thereafter, Canada did not take much interest in the matter: Britain gave her a preference for her wheat and other products, and the Navigation Laws worried the Americans chiefly.

But Britain determined on a Free Trade policy. Sir Robert Peel was forced by the Irish Famine in 1845 to advocate the abolition of protection, and finally, early in 1846, the Corn Laws were repealed by Parliament. Theretofore, for a time at least, Canadian wheat had been admitted to the British markets, but other wheat had been practically kept out by heavy duties.

By the repeal of the Corn Laws and lumber duties, Canada lost her preference. Stanley declared that the basis of colonial union was destroyed—the mill owners, forwarders and merchants of Canada were on the verge of ruin.

“In 1846, the Legislature of Canada passed an address to the Queen asking that if the grain of the United States should be admitted free into Great Britain, the grain, etc., of Canada should be admitted free into the United States. But ‘converts are always enthusiasts’; and Great Britain was too

ardent a convert to her new creed of Free Trade to stipulate with the United States for any Reciprocity. Congress in the same year passed legislation permitting Canadian bonded exports and imports to pass through the United States—thus giving large profits to the merchants and carriers and filling with traffic the canals of New York; but it did not tend to build up Canadian cities and ports.”

About the same time Lord Elgin wrote to Lord Grey: “I believe that the conviction that they would be better off if they were annexed is almost universally among the commercial classes at present”—and he gave an alarming account of the state of trade—and added “not only the organs of the league, but those of the government and of the Peel party are always writing as if it were an admitted fact that colonies are a burden to be endured only because they cannot be got rid of: the end may be nearer at hand than we wot of.”

Stagnation was universal in Canada, prosperity and progress in that part of the United States near her; many of the younger men lost faith in Canada and thought the only way out of the terrible position in which she found herself was annexation to the United States. Many men, some of them of great note and undoubted loyalty in after life, signed in 1849 a manifesto in favour of union with the nation to the South. Sir John Rose, Sir John J. C. Abbott, Sir Francis Johnson, Sir David MacPherson, Sir George Cartier, Luther Holton, Sir Aimé A. Dorion, E. Goff Penny, the Molsons, the Redpaths, the Workmans—all names held in honour in Canada. It is to be borne in mind that no enmity against the mother land was expressed or intended. What was in view was a peaceful separation, gladly or at least cheerfully submitted to by the Old Land. The movement never seems to have laid hold upon the body of the people, and it speedily died out. John A. Macdonald advocated the

formation of a British America League, whose first principle was to maintain inviolate the connection with the mother country. This was done in 1850 and the efforts of this League coupled with other causes resulted in the disappearance of the annexation sentiment. Perhaps the Reciprocity Treaty of 1854 gave the desire for annexation its death blow.

Since that time, whatever may sometimes have been said by orators desirous of fastening an odious charge upon political opponents, there never has been any annexation sentiment in Canada.

During the Civil War in the United States, the upper classes in Britain were, speaking generally, sympathizers with the South—the Union party were exceedingly angry at the want of sympathy with their cause. It was largely this anger which brought about the abrogation of the Reciprocity Treaty of 1834.

I have elsewhere described what took place:

“The Treaty terminated March 17th, 1866. Politicians in the United States had been outspoken in the view that the complete abrogation of trade between Canada and the United States would bring about the speedy annexation of the former—the word was ‘starve the Canadians into annexation, compel them to a close union, a political union as well as commercial—not partial but entire and complete.’ The Consul-General of the United States at Montreal openly expressed sentiments of this character at a public meeting at Detroit, and many a man was urged in terms such as these: ‘Sustain Reciprocity and you establish monarchy in British North America; defeat it and you ensure the triumph of republicanism over this continent.’ In vain did men like Joseph Howe say, ‘No consideration of finance, no question of balance for or against them upon interchanges of commodities can have any effect upon the loyalty of the British Provinces, or tend in the slightest degree to alienate the affections of the people

from their country, their institutions, their government and their Queen. There is not a man who dare, on the abrogation of the treaty, if such should be its fate, take the hustings and appeal to any constituency on annexation principles throughout the entire domain.' "

The result was what Howe foretold, and entirely different from what had been anticipated in the United States. Indeed the failure of the confident prophecies of those desiring the annexation of Canada was as marked as was the utter and disgraceful failure to implement the boast of easy and speedy conquest of Canada in 1812.

I have elsewhere thus described the results which followed the abrogation of the Reciprocity Treaty:

"The Reciprocity Treaty, procured with so much trouble was denounced, and Canada had necessarily to seek other markets. Much suffering ensued—I know whereof I speak—but no word of weak complaining was heard—the United States had a right to do as they did, and hard hit as Canada was, she recognized that right. But she had then to seek new markets—and, what was more difficult, must adapt her output to the new markets. Time and again was the attempt made to procure more favourable consideration for her products from the authorities at Washington. As often was the attempt a failure And the manner in which my country has gone through her years of trouble and anxiety, of penury and care, till now, with her new avenues of trade well beaten and her commerce thoroughly established, she can look the whole world in the face and challenge admiration, is known to all who keep track of the world's commercial and industrial history."

"Other important results followed the abrogation of the Treaty; the Federation of the Provinces then under consideration was hastened on and became an accomplished fact within fifteen months, the project

of an Intercolonial Railway which had been allowed to lapse was taken up with vigour and pushed on, Commissioners were sent to British and other West India Islands to seek trade, the canals were enlarged, ocean and river steamship lines projected and subsidized, and ship-building received a vigorous impetus. The traffic between the United States and Canada fell from an average during the three years before the repeal, of \$75,000,000 per annum, to an average of \$57,000,000 per annum for the three years after the repeal. The trade of the Dominion speedily recovered from the blow, and soon overtook and far surpassed its former figures.

“Delegates from Canada went to Washington in January, 1866, and remained a fortnight in the endeavour to negotiate a new treaty, but without effect.

“In March a bill for the same purpose was introduced in the House of Representatives, but failed to pass.”

“Both parties in Canada were and for long continued to be anxious for Reciprocity to be renewed: and it was not till after statesmen of both parties had been received with coldness and their approaches rejected, sometimes with scant courtesy, that the project was looked upon as hopeless, and Canada reconciled herself to work out her destiny without the supposed advantage of friendly and favourable trade relations with the more numerous people to the South.”

But during all that time of stress there was no recrudescence of the annexation sentiment of 1849—no Canadian, however hard hit, even hinted at buying better trade relations by renunciation by Canada of her birthright as a member of the British Empire.

A little later, an attempt was made by the late Goldwin Smith to stir up some feeling of the kind, met with ridiculous and well-deserved failure—he

failed to understand in almost every particular the Canadian people.

There is another interesting episode which should be mentioned: it has never received the attention which, to my mind, it deserves.

For a time after the American civil war there were negotiations which might have resulted in Canada being called upon to make a definite choice as to her continued union with Britain. Up to 1870—I think it may fairly be said, it was the feeling in official circles in Westminster that Canada was on the way to separation from the Empire, a separation that would inevitably come: and that such separation would be well for both the mother country and the Colony. Beaconsfield, generally considered as an Imperialist of the extreme type, had been reported as speaking of “our wretched colonies which hang like a millstone around our necks”—the Times as late as 1869 in an article probably inspired said: “Instead of the Colonies being dependencies of the Mother Country, the Mother Country is a dependency of the Colonies. We are tied while they are loose. We are subject to danger while they are free.” And shortly after, when there was some complaint in Canada as to some of the provisions of the Treaty of Washington of 1871, the Times said openly and bluntly, “From this day forth look after your troubles yourself: you are big enough, you are strong enough, you are intelligent enough * * * We are both now in a false position and the time has arrived when we should be relieved from it. Take up your freedom, your days of apprenticeship are over.”

This feeling in influential circles was well known to the American Government: and I think it clear that the idea of getting hold of Canada was the governing motive in the mind of Sumner when he brought about the rejection by the Senate of the Johnson-Clarendon Convention intended to get rid of the difficulty

between Britain and the United States over the Alabama matter. Goldwin Smith, amongst others, foresaw (as they thought) at that time that the end of it all was to be the annexation of Canada by way of full indemnity for the alleged wrongs of Britain against the United States—as Adams put it, “An ultimate seizure of Canada by way of indemnification.” Zach. Chandler, Senator from Michigan, spoke in violent terms against Britain and stated baldly “his desire that Great Britain should possess no territory on the American Continent.”

When Mr. Rose, afterwards Sir John Rose, was introduced, or introduced himself, into the negotiations going on, and informed Secretary Fish of how far he could go in the way of concessions, Sumner said: “The greatest trouble, if not peril, being a constant source of anxiety and disturbance, is from Fenianism, which is excited by the British flag in Canada. Therefore, the withdrawal of the British flag cannot be abandoned as a condition or preliminary of such a settlement as is now proposed. To make the settlement complete, the withdrawal should be from this hemisphere, including provinces and islands.” Sir Edward Thornton, the British Ambassador, sincerely wished a settlement of the trouble: he repeated what he had often said before, that Great Britain was willing, even anxious, for the Colony to become independent—but could not force independence upon Canada—he added: “It is impossible to connect the question of Canadian independence with the Alabama claims: not even to the extent of providing for the reference of the question of independence to a popular vote of the people of the Dominion. Independence means annexation. They are one and the same thing.”

The President, General Grant, went himself the length of suggesting to Thornton the possibility of Britain quitting Canada, and Hamilton Fish urged

it upon him. Thornton replied: "Oh, you know, that we cannot do. The Canadians find fault with me for saying so openly as I do that we are ready to let them go whenever they shall wish; but they do not desire it." Fish claimed that it was the manifest destiny of Canada to be annexed to the United States, and hoped it might be in Grant's administration.

The proposition that Canada should be handed over in payment of Great Britain's debts did not escape the notice of Canadians. From one end of the Dominion to another, an outraged cry went up without distinction of race, creed or politics. No one can forget the sledge-hammer articles by the late George Brown—and they were but a sample of the whole.

It was in vain for Thornton to say: "It is impossible for Great Britain to inaugurate a separation. They are willing and even desirous to have one." Canadians with one voice said, "We shall not separate: our flag and our Queen are the flag and the Queen of the British Empire, and we shall not give up our share in them."

Grant had been accustomed to look on Great Britain as an enemy: he was strongly inclined to a policy of territorial expansion: he had said that if Sherman could not take Canada in thirty days he should be cashiered: he had no knowledge of or much regard for international law, and it is fairly clear that at one time he had in mind the possibility of an armed conquest of Canada. But, whether by reason of his quarrel with Sumner or some other reason, his mind was taken off Canada and reverted to his old obsession of expansion southward, Cuba, Mexico—and Canada escaped her "inevitable destiny" once more.

I have now shown how Canada is British.

The unexplained, and apparently unexplainable neglect by the English navigators to take advantage of the easy St. Lawrence route to the interior of the Continent, the greed and selfishness of a Stewart King,

the bed-chamber influence of a Lady Masham, the effeminacy and want of capacity of a royal favourite's brother, the skill and valour of a Wolfe, the century-old enmity of French and English colonist, the energy and valour of Sir Guy Carleton, the contemptible meanness and dishonesty of some of the States of the American Union, the ubiquity and bravery of Sir Isaac Brock, the ambition for Southern conquest—or acquisition, rather—of an American President, the loyalty of Canadians from the first, and the sound common sense, regard for liberty and constitutional government shown by Imperial statesmen, all had their part in keeping Canada within the Empire.

That is the “How?”—the “Why?” goes deeper and is of the present and not the past. We are British because we have as a birthright, a share in the Union Jack, a share in the long story of valour and self-sacrifice of those who have lived under its folds, in the glory of many centuries of history.

We are convinced that there is no secular institution which can compare as an instrument of good to mankind with the British Empire: and we are determined not to give up our share in it. Nowhere is there such liberty as the British subject enjoys—not bound by the dead hand of a dead and gone generation, he makes his government as he wishes it to be, “Girt by friend or foe, he says the thing he will.” Thought is free, speech is free, worship of God is free.

And with freedom comes opportunity. In every knapsack there is the Marshal's baton, the career is open to the talent—a man is what he makes himself—the barber's apprentice may become the Chief Justice of England, the farmer's son or the stone-mason, the Prime Minister of Canada.

We are a free nation in a free Empire—and what can heart wish more? What more can the most ardent patriot demand?

